(c) the other steps taken to revive tea, coffee and rubber industries in Kerala, West Bengal, Tripura and Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) The continuous fall in prices of tea and coffee, coupled with high cost of production, has adversely affected the economy of the plantations, resulting in some tea and coffee plantations being abandoned or under lock out in the States of West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Tripura. This has in turn affected the livelihood of a number of plantation workers.

(b) and (c) Government of India is fully alive to the problems being faced by the plantation sector and a number of steps have been taken to deal with the situation. In order to provide relief to the growers of tea, coffee, natural rubber and tobacco, the Government has approved the establishment of a Price Stabilisation Fund with an initial corpus of Rs. 500 crores. The other steps taken include restructuring of the term loan as well as crop loans availed of by the growers of coffee and tea from the commercial banks, interest subsidy to the growers of coffee, financial incentives for the export of tea, coffee and rubber programmes for quality upgradation, innovative marketing strategies in the International as well as domestic markets to arrest the decline in exports and to increase the domestic consumption, reduction in excise duty on tea and increase in customs duty on import of tea and coffee etc. The programmes and schemes of the 10th Five Year Plan have also been formulated to ensure long term development of the plantation sector and are targeted at increasing productivity, technology upgradation, value addition, product diversification and improving the quality and marketability of these commodities.

In the case of tea, Government has also appointed Export Committees to make an in-depth study of the closed tea gardens in the States of West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Tripura and to suggest a package of measures for their viability and revival.

Industrial policy for development of NER

1094. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any set industrial policy for the development of the North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the said policy is being overhauled; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government have announced a New Industrial Policy and other concessions for the North-Eastern region on 24th December, 1997. The Industrial Policy for the region aims at attracting investors by giving them the following incentives/concessions/subsidies:—

(i) Excise and Income Tax exemptions for a period of 10 years.

(ii) Subsidies, such as Transport Subsidy, Capital Investment Subsidy, Central Interest Subsidy and premium for Comprehensive Insurance on capital investment.

(iii) Promotion of infrastructure development through Schemes like Growth Centre of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion and Integrated Infrastructure Development Centre (IIDC) of Ministry of Small Scale Industry.

(iv) A financial institution namely, North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi) has been established as a Special Purpose Vehicle for development of the North-Eastern region and is the nodal agency for disbursement of subsidies in the region.

(c) and (d) To assess the impact of the North-East Industrial Policy (NEIP) on the industrialization of North-Eastern region a study is being proposed through an independent Consultant.

Export and production of coffee

1095. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of coffee produced in the country and the total consumption in the country;